

## **JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

### **HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM EVERETT EMENO**

Dear Scottish Parliament,

I am Everett Emeno, an American citizen. I am voicing my concern about the Scottish Hate Crime Bill. To be blunt, this bill sets a precedent to enable blatant disregard and violation of human rights in regards to freedom of speech in the future. While prejudice is a problem that many people are passionate about, and rightfully so, the control of hate speech is a precarious and dangerous way to approach the issue.

The definition and prosecution of hate speech by a governmental body, even if encouraged by its people, can easily lead to the subsequent restriction of free speech as a whole. To understand the potential danger of this change, one must simply ask "what can or can't be classified as hate speech?". The new offences in relation to "stirring up hatred" is an example of this danger. If prosecution can be taken against misogyny, is misandry equally taken action against? If one were to denounce the UK Conservative party, would that be offered equal legal action even though it would not be socially acceptable? Following the passing of this Bill, if an individual were to decry the Scottish government, could that be considered stirring up hatred? These are serious questions, and they deserve to be addressed. Many find this bill to be unjust because it doesn't lay these concerns to rest.

Historically, authoritarian and fascist systems of government have controlled freedom of speech to disarm potential opposition to establish and maintain their power. By doing this, they had effectively prevented their own people from voicing their opinions toward these tyrannical systems of government. While today this bill's evolution may be motivated by social reform and progress, it lays the foundation for future laymakers to potentially make changes that could be used to usher in tyrants who wish to abuse hate speech legislation to control and oppress the innocent.

The freedom to express our opinion is a human right, and should remain one. While some use it to express hateful, ignorant, or bigoted opinions, it is still free speech. Just because a person's use of this human right offends another, does not permit those rights to be taken away. François-Marie Arouet (better known as Voltaire) famously said "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Classically, this quote has become a cornerstone for the preservation of free speech, because it means equally preserving for all forms of speech, even the deplorable. This bill ultimately goes against the principle presented in that quote.

I propose that this bill be rejected and modified to protect the freedom of Scotland's people to voice their own opinions. Thoughts and opinions should not be criminal, no matter how distasteful they may be. hateful opinions do not equate to violent actions, and until someone acts upon those thoughts, the prosecution of those opinions is a blatant violation of human rights. The bill should reflect this as well, as thoughts and opinions are not worthy of being considered a crime. If discarding this bill is not

feasible, I suggest addressing the concerns of the people and ratify this bill to protect all groups because hatred, and violence motivated by hate, is not a one-way street. We're all human after all.

I conclude my letter by paraphrasing another quote, this time by George Orwell, from his 1945 book, Animal Farm; "All men are equal, but some men are more equal than others." To elucidate, under the guise of equality, those in power can use that same system to persecute those with less power, and it is utterly unjust.

Sincerely,

Everett Emeno  
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